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CHICAGO'S PUBLIC HOUSING today

Monthly Report Chicago Housing Authority
Issued June 15, 1954

608 South Dearborn Street Chicago 5, Illinois

HOUSING BILL OF 1954 GOES TO CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

As TODAY goes to press, the Congressional Housing Bill of 1954 which will determine whether any more public housing is built in Chicago* or elsewhere in the nation goes to a joint Senate-House Conference Committee.

While such a committee is normally charged with compromising the differences between Senate and House versions of legislation, a move is reported on in the House to restrict action by its conferees with respect to the public housing provisions of the bill.

The Senate version of the 1954 Housing Bill was passed on June 3d. The Senate bill contained an amendment providing for construction of 140,000 low-rent public housing units to be built at the rate of 35,000 a year for four years. The House version of the bill contained no provision for public housing.

Under the rule approved by the House on June 15 which permitted the naming of conferees to the committee, a motion may be made from the House floor to "instruct" the conferees. If such a motion is made conferees will not have a free hand in ironing out differences between the Senate and House versions of the bill, but will be bound by decisions of the House.

PHA Reduces Debt to Treasury

The Public Housing Administration on June 10 announced that it has repaid the Treasury another $90,000,000 of the funds borrowed to finance low-rent housing units, according to the June 11 issue of the Wall Street Journal.

(cont'd on p. 2)

PROGRESS CHA FEDERAL-AID PROGRAM
(Percent completed, May 31, 1954)

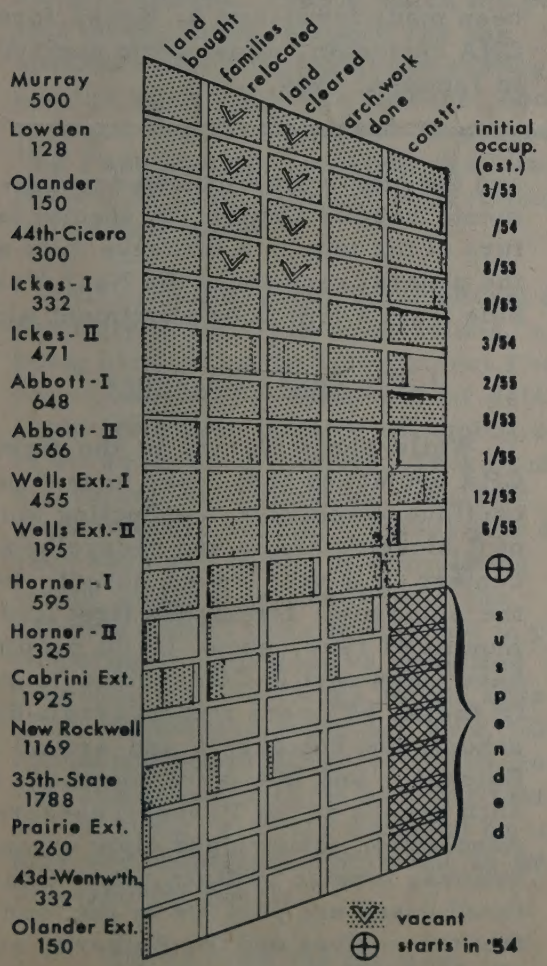


*Chart at left shows construction of 5,949 low-rent apartments in approved CHA program depends on Congressional action.

John R. Fugard, Chairman Joseph P. Sullivan, Vice Chairman John L. Yancey, Treasurer Samuel N. Katzin Elizabeth Wood, Executive Secretary

The latest repayment brings to $455 million the amount PHA turned in to the Treasury in this fiscal year and reduces the debt from $655 million last July 1 to $200 million at present.

The money repaid represents funds borrowed from the Treasury and re-loaned to local housing authorities for the development of low-rent housing projects. It is the third payment made since Congress last year directed PHA to refinance outstanding loans to local authorities. The refinancing calls for local authorities to sell temporary short-term notes for an amount sufficient to pay off the authorities' Series B bonds held by PHA as well as Series A bonds held by private investors.

SULLIVAN ELECTED CHA VICE CHAIRMAN

Joseph P. Sullivan was elected vice chairman of the CHA by his fellow commissioners at a special meeting of the Board held in the Authority's offices on June 2d. Mr. Sullivan was appointed to the Board by Mayor Kennelly in August, 1953, for a five-year term which runs until January, 1958. The post of vice chairman has been vacant since March, 1954, when John R. Fugard who previously held the office, was elected chairman.

There is still one vacancy on the board. As yet, no replacement has been made for Henry A. Kruse, former CHA chairman, whose term expired in January, 1954.

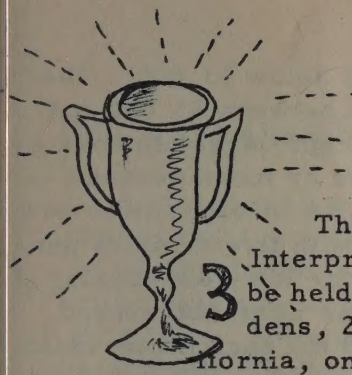
ABBOTT HOMES OPEN FOR TOURS

To satisfy numerous requests to inspect Grace Abbott Homes, newest CHA housing development on the Near West Side, the Authority began scheduling visiting hours at the project on June 1st. One of the four completed 15-story buildings at 1440 West 14th Street is open to visitors from 1 to 3 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Friday, and from 7 to 9 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Both individuals and groups are welcome, and tours by school classes, church groups and other agencies can be arranged by telephoning the Chicago Housing Authority.

A demonstration apartment, furnished on a do-it-yourself basis, is open for inspection. Visitors are also invited to tour the project and its neighbors, which include Jane Addams Houses, Robert H. Brooks Homes, and the city-state financed development, Loomis Courts. A special feature of the tour is a birdseye view of the general renewal of the Near West Side from a 15th floor apartment windo

1,100 Take CHA Tours

While Abbott Homes is the first CHA project to hold "open house" on a continuous schedule, conducting tours of C hicago's slums and redevelopment centers is a year-round activity for the Authority. During the first five months of 1954, about 1,100 people have taken part in CHA-guided tours. Of these, 687 were students from high schools and colleges in and around Chicago, and 404 were members of such groups as the Parent-Teachers Association, church and civic organizations, foreign visitors, etc. Chartered buses are paid for by the tourists themselves and the Authority supplies a guide-lecturer.



CHA INTERPROJECT FESTIVAL SCHEDULED FOR AUGUST 8

The fifth annual CHA Interproject Festival will be held at Lawndale Gardens, 25th Street and California, on Sunday, August 8, from 1 to 5 p. m. Lawndale was the 1953 winner of the Babette Stiefel cup. Because Lawndale is a small housing community, accommodating the large crowd, which regularly shows up for the annual party posed a problem, but the Chicago Park District came to the rescue.

In the wide, tree-lined parkways along California Avenue which the project faces, there is space for the speakers' platform, audience seating, and the booths in which flowers, hobbies and handcrafts will be displayed. The Park District has given the Interproject Festival Committee permission to use this space.

All arrangements, from advance publicity to soda-pop concessions, are being handled by the Interproject Festival Committee, composed of delegates from CHA housing communities in all sections of the city. This Committee has been meeting regularly since March, working tirelessly to devise ways and means of stimulating tenant interest in beautifying the grounds around their homes and in participating in constructive activities programs for residents of all ages. What started five years ago as a CHA-sponsored get-together for public housing tenants has become an important annual event, entirely managed by tenants and eagerly participated in by thousands of people.

Three Cups for the Best

Awarding of the trophies is always a highlight of the Festival program. The Babette Stiefel Cup will go to the project presenting the best all-round appearance in the rowhouse and walk-up apartment building class. Apartment buildings of the elevator type will compete for the Howard Shaw Cup. For the second year, the Arch Winning Cup will go to the housing development which has shown the most tenant interest and initiative and the greatest improvement over the previous year. Another feature of the day's celebration will be the presentation of a queen from each project and the crowning of the Festival Queen.

Energetic chairman of this year's Interproject Festival Committee is Mrs. Donald Rooney, French war bride and mother of three young sons. Her husband is a Chicago boy, graduate of Farragut High School, who was stationed at an air base in France with the Army Engineers during World War II. He met Georgette, who worked in Paris for the French Government, at a Red Cross Dance, and they were married in 1946. They returned to the United States in 1948 with their young son, Gilles, now 7 years old. Two other sons have since been added to the family: Donald, Jr., who is 5, and Glenn, 3 1/2. Don Rooney has a clerical job at the Western Electric plant and he and his family have lived at Lawndale Gardens for four years. Mrs. Rooney takes her job as committee head seriously and is appreciative of the opportunity it affords her. "I want to learn to be a real American," she says, "and I think the best way to do it is to work with people so I can learn your ways and your viewpoints."

NEW CHA TENANTS SHOW $2,500 AVERAGE INCOME

In the first three months of 1954, 804 new families became tenants of CHA low-rent housing projects built with federal aid. The average income for these families was $2,543 a year.

As shown in the table below, about half of the families earned less than $2,500. Another fourth of the total had incomes in the next $500 bracket -- above $2,500 but below $3,000. The next fifth earned between $3,000 and $3,500. Forty-eight large families -- families with five or more persons -- moved in. As CHA income limits now stand, a family with five or more persons is eligible for low-rent housing if its annual income does not exceed $3,500 plus $100 for each minor child. Thus, a family with five minor children may be admitted if its annual income is $4,000; a family with seven children may have $4,200.

Incomes of New CHA Tenants in Federal-Aid Projects
Period Ended March 31, 1954

	Number of New Move-Ins	Percent
TOTAL	804	100%
Incomes:		
Under $1,500	129	16
$1,500 - 1,999	148	19
$2,000 - 2,499	108	13
$2,500 - 2,999	197	25
$3,000 - 3,499	174	22
$3,500 - 3,999	41	5
$4,000 - 4,999	7	/a

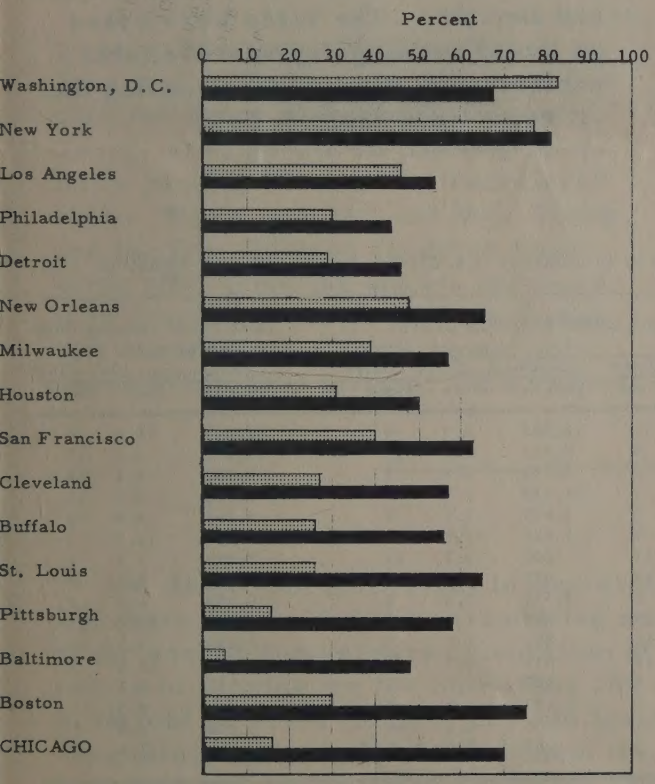
/a - Less than 1%

CHICAGO PANORAMA AND PUBLIC HOUSING, CHA's annual report for 1952, got honorable mention last month when the Welfare Public Relations Council of Greater Chicago distributed the annual Helen Cody Baker awards. The certificate was presented to the Authority "in recognition of its outstanding contribution toward a better understanding of social welfare in 1953," and for continuing excellence in annual reports. CHA regrets that its stock of copies of the winning publication has been exhausted.

CHICAGO TAKES 13TH PLACE IN RENTAL HOUSING CONSTRUCTION FOR 1953

Chicago built a little less than one rental unit for each thousand persons of its population in 1953, placing the city thirteenth among sixteen large U. S. cities. Even this figure includes new public housing units, which accounted for 45 percent of the total number of apartments built. Seven cities, ranging in size from New Orleans to New York, built rental units at a rate several times greater than did Chicago.

COMPARISON OF NEW PRIVATE RENTAL CONSTRUCTION TO EXISTING RENTER-OCCUPIED UNITS IN 16 LARGEST U. S. CITIES, 1953



Percent of all new dwellings in structures built for occupancy by 2 or more families.

Percent of all existing dwellings in city renter-occupied

SOURCE: Data for new apartments based on authorized dwelling units reported in Construction, February, 1954 BLS; percent of dwellings renter-occupied based on 1950 Census reports; data does not include suburbs. Private construction only, excluding public housing.

Seventy percent of all Chicago's dwellings are renter-occupied. Only New York with 81 percent and Boston with 75 percent contain a higher percentage of renter-occupied units. When new private apartment construction is compared to existing rental units, Chicago rates even lower: it drops to the bottom of the list, since only 16 percent of all private construction in the city last year went into rental housing. (See chart.) While apartment construction was generally low throughout the nation, in all but one other city rental units represented from at least a quarter to more than 80 percent of the total private construction volume, with the percentage in most cases reasonably close to the size of the existing rental market. Only in Baltimore was the proportion of private housing built to serve the rental market lower than Chicago's, but in Baltimore only 48 percent of the existing units are renter-occupied.

Public Housing Major

Public housing construction bolstered apartment building rates in many large cities. In nine instances, public housing starts last year ranged from 38 to more than 75 percent of the total apartment volume. However, in Los Angeles and in Washington, D.C., which ranked in first and fifth place in overall building rates, public housing units accounted for less than 10 percent of the total apartment construction. In Houston and in Milwaukee, which ranked second and fourth in overall building, there were no new public housing starts. On the other hand, in New Orleans, which stood in third place, almost (cont'd p. 6)

half of all apartments built were in public housing projects. This suggests that a low level of public housing construction does not necessarily follow a high rate of private building, or vice versa.

Chicago's share of public housing, as well as of private rental housing, was small compared with other cities. One of the best measures of a city's participation in the low-rent housing program is obtained by computing the total number of units of public housing in operation and under construction per thousand persons of population. This allows for the wide year-to-year variation in public housing starts and the severe limitations imposed last year by Congress. Even on this basis, in 1953 Chicago ranked next to last, with a rate of less than four low-rent public housing units per thousand persons since 1938. In contrast, Los Angeles, which had the same rate of public housing, led the nation in new private building. The average rate of public housing over the fifteen-year period for all sixteen cities combined was 7.5 units, or about twice the Chicago rate.

The large volume of houses built for sale in Chicago puts the city in a better light when total residential building in the sixteen cities is compared. In overall building, Chicago built three dwellings for every thousand persons of its population in 1953, putting it in eighth place among the sixteen cities. This was about average, and was close to the rate for New York, Philadelphia and Detroit. The rates were based on latest building figures available, exclusive of suburbs surrounding the cities. (See table.)

COMPARISON OF NEW DWELLINGS AND PUBLIC HOUSING IN 16 LARGEST U.S. CITIES, RATES PER 1000 PERSONS, 1953

City	Population (1950)	ALL RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION IN 1953						Total Public Housing Units In Operation and Under Construction, 1937-1953**		
		Total Dwelling Units			Apartment Units Only*					
		Number	Rate	Rank	Number	Rate	Rank	Number	Rate	Rank
New York	7,891,957	21,852	2.8	10	18,383	2.3	6	82,598	10.5	4
CHICAGO	3,620,962	11,015	3.0	8	2,761	0.8	13	13,453	3.7	15
Philadelphia	2,071,605	6,922	3.3	7	3,251	1.6	7	8,737	4.2	13
Los Angeles	1,970,358	29,439	14.9	1	14,130	7.2	1	7,280	3.7	16
Detroit	1,850,568	5,531	3.0	9	2,650	1.4	8	8,261	4.5	10
Baltimore	949,708	4,706	4.9	6	1,024	1.1	11	11.117	11.7	3
Cleveland	914,808	2,219	2.4	11	602	0.7	14	7,079	7.7	7
St. Louis	856,796	1,415	1.6	14	811	0.9	12	4,357	5.1	9
Washington, D.C.	802,178	5,384	6.7	5	4,537	5.6	2	5,083	6.3	8
Boston	801,444	1,273	1.6	15	894	1.1	10	14,449	18.0	1
San Francisco	775,357	1,666	2.1	12	865	1.1	9	2,953	3.8	14
Pittsburgh	676,806	1,352	2.0	13	213	0.3	15	7,081	10.5	5
Milwaukee	637,392	4,368	6.8	4	1,687	2.6	5	2,733	4.3	12
Houston	596,163	7,377	12.4	2	2,259	3.8	4	2,563	4.3	11
Buffalo	580,132	619	1.1	16	163	0.3	16	5,103	8.8	6
New Orleans	570,445	4,916	8.6	3	3,165	5.5	3	9,955	17.4	2

SOURCES: Data for 1953 based on total authorized dwelling units reported in the February 1954 issue of Construction and Monthly Reports of Authorized Dwelling Units, 1953, published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (U.S. Dept. of Labor); published reports of the National Association of Housing & Redevelopment Officials and local agencies in the cities reported. All data for the central city only, excluding suburban areas outside the city limits.

* Includes public housing starts.

** Permanent units only; does not include projects in planning or design stage, or veterans temporary housing.

TV PROGRAM HONORS PRAIRIE COURTS TENANTS

"Is loss of independence the price one pays for living in a public housing project? This fear troubled both my wife and me, but when we moved into Prairie Courts, we met friendly people -- adults and children -- who came to call on us in the old fashioned spirit of neighborliness and ask if they could help us in any way. At Prairie, brotherly love is practiced all the time, and instead of losing our independence, we are leading a full, satisfying life, sharing joys and sorrows with good neighbors."

A national television audience heard these words from William Young on June 2 when Young, his wife, and five children living at Prairie Avenue Courts were guests on Tommy Bartlett's popular "Welcome, Travelers" show. While both Mr. and Mrs. Young and the five children received handsome gifts from the show's sponsors, it is characteristic of William Young that the Prairie Courts community share in his good fortune. The project recreation room is now enjoying a complete children's library and a 20-volume set of the "Book of Knowledge", and there is a large supply of pop corn, two cases of candy bars, and a case of cookies to be divided.

William Young is president of the Tenants Council, co-founder of the Junior Tenants Council and the Goodwill Club. The latter club, which started with seven members and now numbers 55, is composed of the project's senior residents. It came into being because the Youngs and another senior resident wanted to do something for the community. Money in the club's treasury, raised by sponsoring suppers and recreational activities, is used to buy medicine, to send messages of cheer, and otherwise supply emergency needs of the old people at the project, many of whom have no relatives and few friends.

Much of William Young's time is spent teaching weaving, at which he is proficient, and other handcrafts to children and adults of the project. Both Mr. and Mrs. Young are totally blind.

AN 18-ROOM ADDITION to Daniel Hale Williams School, which serves Dearborn Homes and the surrounding neighborhood, was announced May 26, at the second anniversary celebration of the school's dedication. The addition is to provide for the more than 700 elementary-age children anticipated at Harold L. Ickes Homes, 22d and State Streets, when this CHA project is completed. . . . At Williams School the Housing Authority, the Chicago Park District, and the Board of Education have a joint interest in providing recreational as well as educational facilities for community residents.

THE WABASH AVENUE YMCA celebrated its first year at Wentworth Gardens on May 26 with a party for the community. Accomplishments of this lively center of activity are noteworthy. It conducts ten groups for adults which include sewing, dress designing and cooking; Americanization classes which teach reading, writing, arithmetic, American history and civics; folk dancing and band concerts; participation in city events, and pre-natal care. For the youth of the project and the neighborhood there are six "Y" clubs, basketball and baseball teams; classes in modern dancing, arts and crafts; gymnasium and swimming events at the Wabash Building; and countless special events such as trips and outings, special parties, and philanthropic and civic activities. For the coming year, the "Y" hopes to expand its activities to offer even greater opportunities to serve a larger number of neighborhood residents.

HOWLAND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, 16th and Spaulding Avenue, devoted the week of June 2-9 to dispensing information to the residents of its community relative to good nutrition, housing, medical and dental care. CHA was among the city agencies which set up exhibits in the school gymnasium to acquaint the neighborhood with facilities available.

A TEEN-AGER PLEADS
FOR HIS FAMILY

CHA receives many requests for low-rent housing accompained by detailed and lurid descriptions of the substandard living quarters occupied by the applicants. But seldom has the Authority had a more eloquent letter than one written by a Phillips High School senior, age 19. In contrast to current newspaper accounts of self-seeking, destructive teen-agers, here is a young man seriously concerned about the effects of environment on his younger brother and sisters.

When he wrote the letter, Jim Johnson* lived in a slum hotel with his widowed mother, his divorced sister and her 3-year old child, and two young sisters and a brother. This is what he wrote:

". . . Our condition is a critical one. All seven of us are penned into a small dingy 2-room kitchenette apartment in the _____ Hotel. Five of us sleep in one room. In order to study with any degree of quiet, we have to take turns sitting in the toilet. Living conditions, especially for the younger children, are terrible here because of the theft, prositution, and other criminal activities which operate with apparent openness in this building. The building itself is a horrible firetrap.

"We have searched everywhere for a decent place to live. Hardly anyone

will consider renting to us because of the number of children in the family. On the rare occasions when we do find a landlord with a vacancy who doesn't object to children, the rent is so exorbitantly high that we could never pay it.

"My oldest sister and I have helped my mother all we could with the care and supervision of our younger sisters and brothers and have pledged to continue to do so. . . It is a herculean task to maintain good standards of conduct, plant a sense of decency, good morals and good citizenship in the younger children when we are in such a cesspool and hell-hole. . . . We are fighting to maintain our decency and self-respect and especially to give my younger sisters and brother a chance to grow up in clean environment. This we believe to be a part of the American heritage. . . . We are only human. How can we fight single-handed against these conditions? Evenings, I must always be on hand to guide my sisters in and out of the building. Already 'friendly' neighbors have tried to teach my five-year-old brother to steal. We have tried and tried and tried."

CHA is happy to report that one of the first apartments leased in the new Wells Extension went to the Johnson family. They have a three-bedroom apartment for which they pay $49 a month. The family's income comes from Old Age Survivor's Insurance and from the divorced daughter's earnings at a south side printing plant.

*Name fictitious.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON RACIAL TENSIONS has been printed by the Commission on Human Relations. Copies may be obtained from the Commission or the Chicago Housing Authority. The City Council on April 7 concurred in the Committee's recommendations which among other provisions placed the city officially on record against racial discrimination in the use of public facilities. At the same Council meeting, a resolution was adopted reaffirming that it is the policy of the city that public housing should be available to all eligible applicants without regard to race, color, creed or national origin.

SPANISH-SPEAKING CHICAGOANS heard about the city's low-rent housing facilities in their own language on Sunday, June 4, when Radio Station WOPA broadcast a public service program devoted to public housing. At the request of the Government Labor Office of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, CHA supplied a Spanish-speaking staff member to answer questions.

Chicago Housing Authority
608 S. Dearborn St.
Chicago 5, Illinois

today

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LAWNDALE GARDENS, where the 5th Annual Inter-project Festival will be held on Sunday, August 8, is busy sprucing up its grounds for the big party. Lawndale was last year's winner of the Babette Stiefel Trophy given for the best looking housing project in the rowhouse and walk-up apartment category. (See p. 3)

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CHICAGO HOUSING AUTHORITY DEVELOPMENTS

COMPLETED - 26 Developments - 12,168 Dwellings

1. Jane Addams Houses	(F)	1,027	14. Leclaire Courts	(C-S)
2. Julia C. Lathrop Homes	(F)	925	15. Racine Courts	(C-S)
3. Trumbull Park Homes	(F)	462	16. Ogden Courts	(C-S)
4. Ida B. Wells Homes	(F)	1,658	17. Prairie Ave. Cts. -I-II	(C-S)
5. Frances Cabrini Homes	(F)	584	18. Archer Courts	(C-S)
6. Robert H. Brooks Homes	(F)	834	19. Loomis Courts	(C-S)
7. Bridgeport Homes	(F)	141	20. Philip Murray Homes	(F)
8. Lawndale Gardens	(F)	128	21. Victor A. Olander Homes	(F)
9. Altgeld Gardens	(F)	1,499	22. Leclaire Courts Ext.	(F)
10. Wentworth Gardens	(F)	422	23. Grace Abbott Homes-I	(F)
11. Dearborn Homes	(F)	800	24. Ida B. Wells Extension-I	(F)
12. Maplewood Courts	(C-S)	132	25. Harold L. Ickes Homes-I	(F)
13. Harrison Courts	(C-S)	126	26. Gov. Frank O. Lowden Homes	(F)

UNDER CONSTRUCTION - 6 Developments - 2,079 Dwellings

17. Prairie Ave. Cts. -III	(C-S)	28	25. Harold L. Ickes Homes-II	(F)
23. Grace Abbott Homes-I-II	(F)	720	26. Gov. Frank O. Lowden Homes	(F)
24. Ida B. Wells Extension-II	(F)	195	27. Gov. Henry Horner Homes -I	(F)

IN DESIGN AND LAND PURCHASE STAGE - 8 Developments - 6,192 Dwellings

17. Prairie Ave. Cts. -IV	(C-S)	8	31. Prairie Ave. Cts. Ext.	(F)
27. Gov. Henry Horner Homes-II	(F)	325	32. Olander Homes Ext.	(F)
28. 35th & State	(F)	1,788	33. 43d & Wentworth	(F)
29. Cabrini Extension	(F)	1,925	34. No Sites Designated	(F)
30. Madison & Western	(F)	1,169		

VETERANS TEMPORARIES - 8 sites - Demountables and Others (C-F)

(F) Financed with federal funds; (C-S) city and state funds; and (C-F) city and federal funds